VISIT…

LEGEND OF THE SILVER SKELETON

An Adventure for Four to Six 6th-Level Characters

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INTRODUCTION

In summer 2005, the D&D website ran the Creature Competition: Head-to-Head, with sixteen deadly competitors battling for player's favorite. Eludecia, the lovely succubus paladin, took the crown, destined to appear in an online adventure. Her Fight Club stats have been released (at: http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/fc/20050824a); the following adventure now introduces Eludecia to your players (that is, should they succeed in its goals).

The Hostel of the Sacred Stone has long been known for its respite, fine beers…and long-standing rumor of a silver skeleton hidden within the nearby aqueduct. So far these rumors have remained just that—no one has successfully ventured too far within the dwarven-constructed aqueduct to search out this prize. Several have tried, only to be hindered by the kobold tribe also calling these tunnels home.

"Legend of the Silver Skeleton" is designed for four to six 6th level characters. This adventure may be started as a side trek while the PCs travel to or from any major city, or may stand on its own.

PREPARATION

This adventure requires the use of the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. It also utilizes information found in *Dungeon Master's Guide II*, and *Monster Manual III*; if the Dungeon Master does not have a copy of these books, the adventure may still be run by omitting or modifying items and creatures drawn from that resource.

To get started, print out the adventure, including the maps. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, threats, and major nonplayer characters (particularly their motivations). Some text is designated as player information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Centuries ago, dwarven workers constructed a massive underground aqueduct, linking a distant mountain lake to their temple in a distant city. Their aqueduct complete, the dwarves built a monastery at the lake where their most elderly workers retired; as it turned out, this location proved a most dangerous choice, as the dwarves faced constant raiding by local stone giants—that is, until a dwarven cleric managed to convert one stone giant to their cause.

THE STONE GIANT

The stone giant, taking the mantle Sonnlinor Stoneheart, dedicated himself to defending the mountain temple—even in the face of a far greater threat, that of a blue dragon awakened to the scent of the temple's rich tribute. Sonnlinor Stoneheart sacrificed himself in the dragon's attack, pulling the mountainside atop them both. Yet such became the legend of his actions that the stone giant was sainted and his remains recovered as holy reliquaries. These reliquaries, a piece of the stone giant's bone and his largest throwing rock, were taken down the mountain and incorporated into a local hostel.

As far as Sonnlinor Stoneheart's legend spread, so folks came to marvel at the healing powers of his reliquaries (and enjoy the hostel's unusual run of good beer). At some point, Eludecia (herself a convert to the forces of good) departed on pilgrimage to visit the hostel. So far as anyone could ascertain, she never arrived.

THE SUCCUBUS PALADIN

Eludecia's own tale is no less startling. A succubus converted to good by her angelic lover, she campaigned against her former demonic cohorts; at the height of which, she helped banish a powerful balor from the Prime Material plane, earning her eternal enmity from her own kind. The balor later dispatched one his generals, the marilith Aishapra, to ambush Eludecia en route to the hostel. Alone and overwhelmed, Eludecia was defeated…but not killed. Instead, the marilith employed powerful magic to transform Eludecia's bones into silver and trap them within one of the aqueducts' gelatinous cubes (originally placed there to clean its tunnels). Eludecia has remained trapped ever since, forever regenerating and dissolving in the horrid confines of this purgatory.

THE KOBOLD TRAPMASTER

Over the years, rumors of this silver skeleton have circulated in the hostel's taproom. Nevertheless, no one has been able to venture too far in search, in fear of the aqueduct's current residents, a band of kobolds led from the city years before by the famed kobold trapmaster, Yin Yensine.

Yin, seeking a better home for his kobold tribe (and a place to conduct bizarre research on aberrations), migrated an incredible distance up the aqueduct to the tribe's current location. He then dammed the aqueduct's flow of water, providing his tribe a steady source of fish and water (and which the hostel also uses for its well). The first of many projects, Yin Yensine spent the remainder of his days carving out the aqueduct's tunnels and elaborately trapping them. Although Yin Yensine passed away some time ago, his name is still revered by his tribe's descendents, and his traps remain securely in place, making access to the silver skeleton all the more difficult.

POSSIBLE LOCALES FOR THIS ADVENTURE

Because of the underground aqueduct that is central to this adventure, it cannot go just anywhere. Some possible locations include:

1. In Veluna, between the Lortmils and Veluna City. The aqueduct originates in the Lortmils and ends in Veluna City.
2. In Sterich, between Istivin and Gorna. The aqueduct originates in the Crystalmist Mountains and ends in either of the two cities.
3. In the Silver Marches, on the road to Silverymoon. The aqueduct would originate in the Nether Mountains or the Spine of the World.
4. In the Vast, close to the Earthfast Mountains. The distant city could be Ravens Bluff or Tantras.
5. In Karrnath, between Vulyar and Irontown. The aqueduct starts in the Ironroot Mountains and ends in Vulyar. Note that dwarves in Eberron don't worship Moradin.
6. In Breland, between Starilaskur and New Cyre. The aqueduct originates in the Seawall Mountains and ends in Starilaskur.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

In Part 1, the adventure begins when the PCs arrive at the Hostel of the Sacred Stone and are encouraged to investigate the rumor of the silver skeleton. Within the aqueduct, the PCs will need to negotiate the flooded tunnels and kobold traps, eventually finding the silver skeleton within its gelatinous cube prison. If the PCs rescue the skeleton, it will be revealed as Eludecia, the succubus paladin.

In Part 2, the PCs receive a hero's welcome back at the hostel—and a message from the kobolds that part of the succubus' gear has been secured in Yin Yensine's laboratories. The kobolds cannot access these labs, but if sufficiently appeased, they are receptive to the PCs making their own attempt.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Player characters may have heard rumors about the hostel and its amazing reliquaries (not to mention its beer), or may randomly come across the welcoming path to its doorway one night, with its firelight and sounds of good cheer inviting them inside as opposed to another hard night of camping. If the PCs need stronger encouragement to seek out the hostel, a previous encounter on the road may leave one of them wounded or inflicted with disease; a Local Knowledge check (DC 12) will inform them that they can find the healing they need at the famed hostel.

Soon after the PCs arrive, they'll hear mention about a "silver skeleton," a popular local legend readily related by the proprietor, guests at the bar, and the taproom bards; they all know of the skeleton, but no one has any idea that it belongs to Eludecia. Once the PCs hear of the silver skeleton, use one of the following hooks to get them started.

Three-Dragon Ante: If the party stays long enough in the taproom, they'll be invited into a game of *Three-Dragon Ante* (or any other game appropriate for the party). The DM plays the role of the dealer, a local bard by the name of Harold the Mighty (something of a misnomer, given his penchant for exaggeration and self-aggrandizing). During the game, Harold is glad to regale the PCs with the area's local legends, including that of the silver skeleton. In fact, Harold attempts to goad the PCs into a little exploration, hoping their exploits will help fuel the legend; Harold proposes that the first person to leave the game will be the next one to go in search of the skeleton (and assumes the rest of the PCs will join in). Should Harold be the first to leave the game, he will do everything in his power to excuse himself from this chore, citing a competition in the city he needs to attend.

Kobold Infestation: Madge "Fingers" Madgerson (dwarf male rogue 7/dungeon delver 3; use the stats for Morzul Darkhunter on page 44 of *Complete Adventurer* if full statistics are required), proprietor of the hostel, approaches the PCs with an offer. The nearby aqueduct tunnels are infested with kobolds, accessed by the hostel's well. Usually, the kobolds have stayed clear of the hostel grounds; this year, however, their fishing season may not be going so well, and their chieftain has encouraged bolder actions. Kobolds have started rifling through the hostel trash at night, which is normally fine enough, but have also fired crossbows at workers interrupting them or trying to draw water from the well.

If the PCs are interested, Madge would like them to deal with the kobolds one way or another. Ideally, this would involve meeting the kobold chieftain, and delivering Madge's offer of a barrel of beer every other month, to be placed at the edge of the well, until the fishing picks up. However, Madge isn't opposed to strong-arm tactics against the kobolds, if that's what it will take to stop their attacks. Madge will also make it known that the silver skeleton resides somewhere in the tunnels as well, if the PCs come across it—and if they manage to recover it, all the better. In fact, he says, he has a good silver agent in the city if they're looking to broker a deal…

A Mysterious Guest: One of the hostel guest approaches the PCs, either in a quiet corner of the taproom, or by a knock on their door late at night. The guest, a comely human woman, claims to be a representative of an angelic patron (Eludecia's lover), and states she has been sent to request their help. The angel would like them to recover the silver skeleton, believing it once belonged to the angel's dear Eludecia.

In reality, this guest is none other than Aishapra, the marilith that defeated and trapped Eludecia. She periodically revisits the hostel both to ensure that Eludecia continues to suffer in her prison, and to hire any likely adventurers in order to test the prison's concealment. If the PCs are reluctant to go on their own, the guest offers them a substantial reward of 10,000 gp (which Aishapra has no intention of paying), as well as the eternal gratitude of her angelic patron. Should the PCs mistrust this mysterious guest, she will use her high Diplomacy skill to try and allay their misgivings. She might show them a (counterfeit) feather, imbued with spells to make it appear as if that of an angel.

If this hook is used, see the Concluding the Adventure section for Aishapra's reaction.

HOSTEL OF THE SACRED STONE

Nestled into the woods along the mountain's trail stands the Hostel of the Sacred Stone—a squat, sturdy construction with one wall and its chimney carved from a single, massive boulder.

The hostel serves as launching point for the following adventure. DMs should consider its placement along the party's route at some considerable distance (say, a tough week's journey) from the nearest city—far enough for the party to appreciate the healing and respite the hostel offers, and be so inclined to stop inside.

The hostel is run by Madge Madgerson, a dwarf of inimitable reputation and hospitality. Madge, a retired rogue and dungeon delver turned proprietor (and

fledging potion-maker) invested much of his adventuring wealth into this small business. In fact, his former short sword (+2, *mighty cleaving*) hangs above the taproom mantle, and the chain skirt from his armor serves as the fireplace grate. The hostel's distance from any major city never bothered Madge; if anything, he preferred to build here to cater to adventurers on their long treks into the wilderness (remembering his old days on the road). Years later, acquisition of the sainted reliquaries only added to the hostel's reputation, and the place is often filled to capacity with a lively clientele.

Most of the hostel guests are local woodfolk, adventurers and the like, though an occasionally exceptional guest is also known to pass through; these include Ellith'rin, a half-amethyst dragon/iridescent naga, and Lady Bestine, a half-gold dragon/pixie.

GOODS AND SERVICES

Players can easily re-supply at the hostel, though Madge encourages this be done through trading amongst guests. With odd patrons about and adventurers returning from expeditions, players can often find items beyond the basic selection of goods, including masterwork weapons, tools, and minor magical items (though guests prefer to trade for items of similar value rather than sell anything for cumbersome gold). If there's a specific need, Madge himself will sell supplies, with the caveat that in addition to the cost of goods the players also sample whatever "house special" he has on tap (see Beer, below).

PCs can also rent beds in the hostel (1 sp/night), though there are no private rooms—Madge encourages a dormitory atmosphere, where guests share 8-bunk rooms.

BEER

While the ceilings of the hostel accommodate medium-sized guests, the bar in the taproom was specifically built to dwarven height—a conceit on Madge's part that he prefers to keep. Despite any discomfort, his beer is nevertheless renowned for a number of reasons. First and foremost is the stone wall of his basement (see Reliquaries). Second, Madge keeps on hand an extensive variety of exotic beverages: everything from fiery orcish whiskey to fine elven wine.

Finally, Madge combines his talents of brewing beer with his interest in brewing potions; the "house special" is offered at discount (if a normal pint costs 4 cp, house specials cost but 1), largely because Madge instills his latest potion attempts into the mix to determine their effectiveness. If drinking a house special, players roll on the table below. Effects last for 1 hour.

Over the years, hostel regulars have learned to stay well clear of the house specials, delighting instead in the effects they have on those passing through. Madge's specials are never intentionally harmful, though they can occasionally have powerful effect. Should PCs complain, Madge will apologize at once, blaming fictitious gnomish distributors (known for their tricks), and try to rectify the situation—often canceling the PCs' tabs, though he rarely has antidotes to the potions' effects themselves.

1-25:	no effect
26-35:	*jump*
36-40:	*enlarge person*
41-45:	*reduce person*
46-50:	*blur*
51-55:	*bull's strength*
56-60:	*invisibility*
61-65:	*levitate*
66-70:	*fly*
71-75:	*gaseous form*
76-80:	*haste*
81-85:	imbiber is fatigued
86-90:	imbiber is nauseous
91-100:	imbiber suffers allergic reaction: sudden excessive hair growth, extreme bouts of coughing, etc.

RELIQUARIES

Even more prominent than its beer, the hostel hosts the sacred reliquaries of Saint Sonnlinor Stoneheart, the stone giant paladin. Either Madge, or any bard in the taproom the PCs are willing to stand a drink, will gladly relate the tale of Stoneheart, every word of which most hostel regulars have long memorized.

The hostel holds two reliquaries: a piece of Stoneheart's bone and the largest of the giant's throwing rocks. Years before, Madge convinced the group of dwarven pilgrims carting these reliquaries down from the mountain to stop in for a beer; the reliquaries have resided here ever since.

Stoneheart's Bone: Worn smooth by countless hands, touching the bone (a piece of the giant's skull) gives the effects of a *cure light wounds* spell to any good or neutral-aligned character, *cure serious wounds* to any dwarf, cleric or paladin, or *cure critical wounds* to any dwarven cleric of Moradin (or dwarven god appropriate to your campaign). These effects are granted once/week.

Stoneheart's Rock: This massive rock was originally set against the side of the hostel; Madge later worked

into it into the hostel itself, carving out the ground beneath so that it formed one wall of the basement and exterior side of the hostel, including the hostel's chimney. To anyone of good or neutral alignment spending an hour before the fire, the rock provides the effects of *remove disease* and *neutralize poison* spells. In addition, any dwarf, cleric or paladin touching the rock gains the effects of *stone tell*, which may be used at any time within the next 3 days. These effects are granted once/month.

PART 1: THE SILVER SKELETON

THE AQUEDUCT

Behind the hostel, its well connects with an ancient underground aqueduct, a massive dwarven construction project dating back centuries. The aqueduct has an equally distinguished history, the main points of which can be readily learned at the hostel: PCs with Knowledge (local) for the area may already know some or all of these facts. Have players make Knowledge

LEGEND OF SAINT SONNLINOR STONEHEART

Ages ago, a monastery dedicated to Moradin was constructed in the nearby mountains near the massive lake which fed a massive aqueduct system. Many dwarven workers, having dedicated themselves for centuries to the aqueduct project, retired to the monastery to spend the remainder of their days in quiet contemplation of the mountains. Unfortunately, the mountains were otherwise occupied. Roving packs of stone giants attacked and eventually destroyed the monastery, filling its tunnels until nothing but the courtyard of its entrance hall remained, open to the stars and surrounding rock.

Even still, dwarven pilgrims continued to come pay their respects to the fallen monastery, camping in this courtyard—a shrine where, it was said, they received oracles from the monastery's blocked tunnels, whispered from the spirits of its former monks.

As the pilgrims came, so the stone giants remained to attack them. That is, until they ambushed one group, killing them all save for a dwarven cleric of Moradin. Sated on the flesh of the other pilgrims, one of the stone giants challenged the cleric to explain why his god was stronger than the giants'. This the cleric was proud to do, offering a display of his spell magic...which he used to shape the surrounding stones, facilitating both his escape and the giant's capture. At this point, the cleric gave a further display, this time of his god's mercy, allowing the giant to live if he would swear to abide by Moradin's tenants.

The stone giant agreed, eventually to the point of complete devotion. He took the name Sonnlinor Stoneheart ("sonnilnor" being dwarvish for "those who work stone" and for the clerics of Moradin), and became the protector of the shrine, sheltering all pilgrims from his former giant tribesman. In time, Sonnlinor Stoneheart gained favor with Moradin himself, earning the status of paladinhood.

However, things worse than stone giants lived in the mountains. A blue dragon had slumbered in its living roots for countless years, until—perhaps drawn by the prospering shrine and the offerings of gold—it awoke and attacked. The giant defended the shrine as best he could, casting stones from the courtyard as his sanctified throwing rocks. Still, he knew the dragon would best him, and in a final moment of sacrifice, the giant pulled down the surrounding mountainsides in a massive avalanche to crush and bury them both.

A final group of pilgrims, already on the road, arrived at the shrine to find it destroyed. That night, a final, whispered message came from the former monestary, telling the pilgrims that the giant had become a saint of Moradin, and that his remains should be taken to a suitable resting place en route to the nearest city, so that others would hear the tale and know the power of Moradin, that could bridge the enmity between the races.

Yet all that could be excavated of the remains was a fragment of the stone giant's skeleton and the largest stone they could find from the former courtyard. These, the dwarves carted from the mountain, stopping after many long days at Madge's fledging hostel. Enjoying the hostel's taproom and truly wondrous beer, they knew the hostel to be as good a resting place as any, with travelers who would come from far and wide to hear the tale of Sonnlinor Stoneheart, and agreed to leave his holy reliquaries with its owner.

(local) checks for their PCs; the PC knows everything in the bullet points below with a DC less than or equal to the roll result.

- The aqueduct was an elaborate feat of engineering, originating at a nearby mountain lake. Taking centuries to complete, the dwarven workers eventually retired to the monestary built around this lake. Sadly, the monestary was destroyed by stone giants, but these events also led to the rise of Saint Sonnlinor Stoneheart [Knowledge (Local) DC 10]

- The aqueduct eventually leads to a Temple of Moradin. Although the water has reduced to little more than a trickle (especially in the dry months—no thanks, in part, to the aqueduct's resident kobolds), it is enough to run their magnificent fountains and is blessed for use as their holy water. [Knowledge (Local) DC 12].

- Before Saint Sonnlinor Stoneheart defeated it (and caused his own demise), the aqueduct was also used as shelter against the ravages of the mountain's blue dragon. Some of the aqueduct tunnels were collapsed as part of the dragon's hostilities. [Knowledge (Local) DC 15]

- At some point, the kobold trapmaster Yin Yensine wandered up the aqueduct, leading his pack of kobolds from the city in search of a new and better home (and for a new place to establish his own workshops). The aqueduct provided the perfect environment; the descendants of these first kobolds remain in the aqueduct to this day, while many of the tunnels are still filled with the results of the kobold trapmaster's devices. [Knowledge (Local) DC 18]

- To keep the aqueduct clear, the dwarves employed a number of gelatinous cubes. During times of peak flow, the cubes remained in side tunnels; during the dry months, they emerged to sweep clear debris from the main aqueduct channel. [Knowledge (Local) DC 25]

DUNGEON FEATURES

The main aqueduct is a round tunnel, slightly flattened along the bottom, with a diameter of 25 feet. South of the lake (Area 2), flows an icy stream of mountain water, roughly 3 feet wide and 1½ feet deep. This water can be used for drinking; however, immediately south of the kobold warren, it is littered with their refuse. There are no light sources within the aqueduct.

Side tunnels are raised 5 feet above the main aqueduct, constructed with smooth stone walls and 10 foot high ceilings.

1. THE WELL (EL 5)

Behind the hostel, trash is collected into neat bins (though evidence of its displacement can be seen). Further into the woods, a stone circle marks the lip of the well, a former service entrance to the aqueduct. There is a simple crank system, operating a bucket that dips into the lake (Area 2) below. Furthermore, a ladder composed of iron rungs leads 15 feet down to the side of the aqueduct.

Creatures: Four kobolds (In-Kee, Bin-Kee, Pin-Kee, and Ka-Lite) are currently rifling through the trash. Two kobolds are quietly rustling through the trash, looking for anything salvageable, while the other two remain on guard. They will stop and watch the PCs walk by while trying to hide and remain silent. Successful opposed Spot checks (vs. their Hide checks) or Listen checks (vs. their Move Silently checks) are required to detect them. These kobolds are filthy and near skeletal; they are also very skittish, and likely to fire their crossbows at the PCs and run off. However, if carefully approached (especially if offered food), they will admit the fishing season is going terribly, which their chieftain blames on the "silver one."

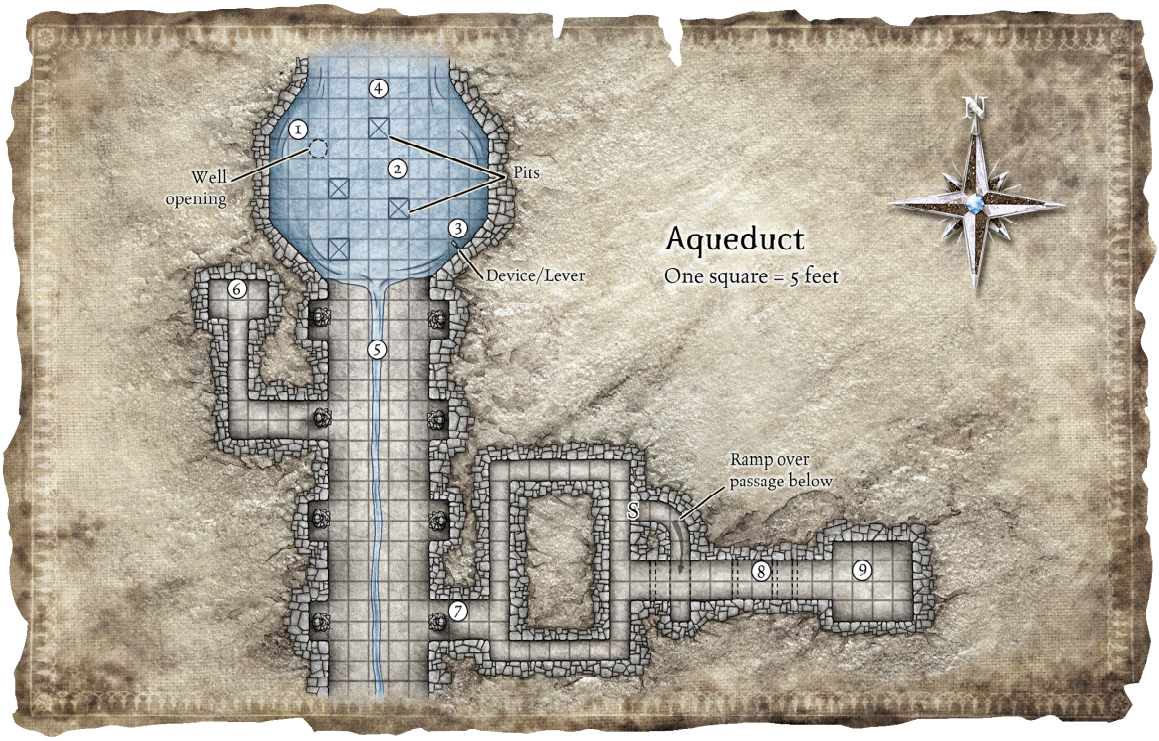
The kobolds are desperate; if the silver skeleton is offered sacrifices—namely, the PCs—they believe it may be appeased. As such, they can provide general directions to Area 7 (entrance to the skeleton's prison), though will admit nothing of any traps along the way.

KOBOLD SWORDSMAN (4) **CR 1 EACH**
Male kobold Warrior 4
LE Small Humanoid (reptilian)
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Draconic

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14
(+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather armor)
hp 18 (4 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0
Weakness light sensitivity

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee short sword +6 (1d4+1/19-20)
Ranged hand crossbow +6 (1d3/19-20)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +1

Abilities Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness



Skills Climb +3, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +5, Jump +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Search +2, Spot +2, Swim +3

Possessions short sword in bad condition, leather armor, hand crossbow, 10 hand crossbow bolts, torn and dirty clothing

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Trap: The ladder's iron rungs, leading into the aqueduct, have been trapped long ago by Yin Yensine. Two rungs (where that character's legs and arms would be, if medium-sized) have spring-loaded hinges; they are set to go off when pressure is placed on the rung below these, causing them to snap shut around their wrists and ankles. Trapped characters must make a DC 20 Balance check, or plummet into the lake below (and be subsequently grabbed by the chokers in the pit nearest the bottom of the ladder). Being trapped in these rungs causes a -10 penalty on Swim checks. The kobolds know to avoid these rungs, and reset them after would-be explorers set them off.

Rung Manacle Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger (nearby rung); manual reset; rungs manacle target's hands and feet and lock (Break DC 26, Escape Artist DC 30); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

2. ARTIFICIAL LAKE (EL 9)

Yin Yensine had all but dammed the flow of water coming down the aqueduct from the mountain lake; his project took advantage of a widening of the tunnel around the service entrance to create an artificial lake from which the kobolds fish (and from which the hostel draws its water). The dam wall rises 4 feet, and provides sluice gates for run-over water to continue past (and to prevent dwarves from the city temple coming to investigate why their water supply has completely stopped).

Evidence of the kobold's fishing nets and gear can be seen around the edge of the dam. A thin (less than 2 inches wide) crumbling ledge against the wall leads from the bottom of the ladder (from Area 1) to the dam wall (DC 20 Balance to walk). A single, rickety kobold-sized boat is moored to the bottom rung (DC 22 Balance check to use; fits 2 Small or 1 Medium sized creature). Otherwise characters will likely need to wade through the lake water to cross.

One pit contains an iron grate, with a tunnel behind leading to Area 7; if the trap in Area 7 is set off, water will flow through this grate to flood the area (the chokers know to leave this pit at such a time).

Creatures: Open pits lie at random along the bottom of the lake, leading to 10x10x15 deep shafts. Two amphibious chokers inhabit each pit, ambushing

any character that approaches within 5 feet. The chokers will attempt to grapple characters, dragging them to the bottom of their pits to drown. If the chokers are brought near death, they will release any captured characters in the hopes that their assailants will then depart.

The kobolds know about the chokers, originally stocked by Yin Yensine. Most do not realize that the chieftain has stopped delivering tribute to these chokers (mainly foodstuffs and minor trinkets), once paid to keep the kobold fishermen safe; as such, the chokers have been consuming as many fish as they can, affecting the kobolds' catch—as well as the occasional unlucky fisherman.

Amphibious Choker (8) **CR 2 each**
CE Small Aberration (aquatic)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +, Spot +
Languages Undercommon

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15
(+1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)
hp 16 (3 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 10 ft., swim 20 ft.
Melee 2 tentacles +6 (1d3+3)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5
Special Atk constrict 1d3+3, improved grab

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 7
SQ quickness, amphibious
Feats Improved Initiative[B], Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy
Skills Climb +13, Hide +10, Move Silently +6, Swim +11 *

Constrict (Ex): A choker deals 1d3+3 points of damage with a successful grapple check against a Large or smaller creature. Because it seizes its victim by the neck, a creature in the choker's grasp cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a choker must hit a Large or smaller opponent with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict. Chokers receive a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks, which is already included in the statistics block.

Quickness (Su): Although not particularly dexterous, a choker is supernaturally quick. It can take an extra standard action or move action during its turn each round.

Amphibious (Ex): Although amphibious chokers breathe by means of gills, they can survive indefinitely on land.

Skills: An amphibious choker has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Treasure: The bottom of each pit is littered with fish and kobold bones, as well as their former tribute (roughly 100 gp in each pit). One of the pits contains a small idol fashioned as a choker with a 10 gp obsidian gem for its eye. This is one of the gemstone needed for the Doorway of the Beholder (see Area 16). A successful Search check (DC 20) is required to find the loot amidst the other refuse in the pits.

3. The Aboleth Counterweight (EL 6)

Four kobolds are concealed along the wall above the lake, waiting to activate the counterweight device to seal off Area 7 (once they see the PCs entering that tunnel). A successful Spot check (DC 20) is required to locate them. Similar to the kobolds in Area 1, they are skeletal and skittish, and can direct players to Area 7, but will profess no knowledge of any traps, including the device they're preparing to use. If any of these escape, then kobolds come to replace them after the PCs move on. Thus, unless the PCs kill all four they will suffer the effects of the trap in Area 7.

Kobold Swordsman (4) **CR 1 each**
Male kobold Warrior 4
LE Small Humanoid (reptilian)
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Draconic

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14
(+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather armor)
hp 18 (4 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0
Weakness light sensitivity

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee short sword +6 (1d4+1/19-20)
Ranged hand crossbow +6 (1d3/19-20)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +1

Abilities Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness

Skills Climb +3, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +5, Jump +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Search +2, Spot +2, Swim +3

Possessions short sword, leather armor, hand crossbow, 10 hand crossbow bolts

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Light Sensitivity (Ex): Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Trap: Yin Yensine, a devoted follower to things aberrant, incorporated them into his traps. A hidden device operates Area 7's counterweight, crudely stylized as an aboleth with a gemstone eye. Anyone operating the counterweight without using the hidden bypass switch will suffer effects as if afflicted by an aboleth's slime. PCs may remember that the hostel's fireplace casts the equivalent of *remove disease*, which would negate this effect if reached in time.

Aboleth Slime Trap: CR 3; magical; touch trigger; automatic reset (2 times only); hidden switch bypass (Search DC 23); *aboleth slime* spell (Fortitude DC 19 negates); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 15.

Treasure: The gemstone eye is an emerald worth 300 gp that is needed for the doorway into Area 16. With a successful Disable Device check (DC 20), the PC may remove it such that it retains its magic power and becomes a *gem of aboleth slime*. It requires the command words hidden in Area 6 to operate.

Gem of Aboleth Slime: This gem releases a single *aboleth slime* spell (see sidebar) by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Moderate transmutation; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *aboleth slime*; Price 1,950 gp; Weight —.

4. TO THE MOUNTAINS

The lake water originates from the north end of the aqueduct, heading toward the distant mountain range (approx. 50 miles away). The aqueduct in this direction is swollen with dammed water, discouraging PCs from heading in this wrong direction. However, persistent characters may wish to swim through (Swim DC 22), and would eventually gain access to a dryer section of the aqueduct. From there, they may continue north at a gradual uphill slope, all the way to the mountain lake (details of which, and encounters along the way, are not included in this adventure).

5. MAIN AQUEDUCT

The aqueduct leads south from the lake, at a gradual downhill slope to the distant city. An icy stream overflowing from the dam, roughly 3 feet wide and 1½ feet deep, runs down the middle of the aqueduct. Five feet above the floor level, alcoves have been carved into the wall, most of which contain a statue commemorating one of the dwarven masons that helped construct these tunnels. These statues run for the next 1½ miles along the aqueduct, a testament to the artistry the dwarves chose to invest in this place despite the expected lack of visitors.

If *stone tell* (gained from the hostel's reliquaries) is cast on any of these statues, they can describe the entrance to the silver skeleton (Area 7), and to "beware the cubes!" The statues will also complain about the noxious kobolds, and know of their warren entrance at Area 10.

6. YENSINE' JOURNAL

Behind this statue runs a service corridor. It ends at a makeshift chamber, a former storehouse for the aqueduct's dwarven workers. Stone cutting tools can be

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NEW SPELL

Aboleth Slime
Transmutation
Level: Sorcerer/wizard 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: permanent (see text)
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell causes the target to be afflicted as if attacked by an aboleth's slime attack. Over the next 1d4+1 hours, then target undergoes a horrible transformation. The target's skin gradually becomes a clear, slimy membrane that must remain moistened with cool, fresh water. Failure to remain moistened results in the target taking 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes, and this damage cannot be healed even by magical means until the target's skin is moistened again. The slime reduces the target's natural armor bonus by 1 (minimum 0). A *remove disease* spell cast before the transformation is complete will restore an afflicted creature to normal. Afterward, however, only a *heal* or *mass heal* spell can reverse the affliction

found here, dating back to the original construction, clustered around a stone workbench. Tucked behind the bench, players who succeed at a Search check (DC 20) may also discover the remains of a battered journal written in kobold.

The journal contains a few pages of Yin Yensine's notes, brought here to read by one of the warren's kobolds and then abandoned. Much of the journal contains unsettling rambling in praise of all things aberrant (and of mind flayers, aboleths and beholders in particular), as well as a very crude sketch of the beholder doorway (Area 16), along with the clue: "Number of eyes is key." The journal also contains the keywords necessary to activate the various doorway gemstone devices (as wands) if removed, though not to deactivate and bypass them.

7. PRISON ENTRANCE (EL 7)

This side tunnel was originally used to house gelatinous cubes; the cubes would emerge during dry months to sweep clear the main aqueduct. However, the reworking of this side tunnel as Eludecia's prison has trapped the cubes inside: a Search check (DC 25) shows that the statue has been more recently cemented into place here.

Trap: Once the party enters, the kobolds in Area 3 (if still able), will operate the counterweight device. If the kobolds activate the counterweight, a massive stone block slides down across the entrance (just behind the statue), sealing it off. At the same time, a counterweight stone block raises, allowing a reserve of water (from the lake at Area 2) to start flooding in. This water will completely fill this tunnel in 12 rounds, threatening to drown the PCs as well as impeding their battle with the cubes (see Area 9).

The deactivation device can be found in the north end of the tunnel. This device matches the one at Area 3 (though the aboleth has a 50 gp amber gemstone for its eye). If activated, the counterweight reverses, opening the tunnel and draining the floodwater. If PCs are unable to locate this device, they might still find the secret door (indicated on the map; Search DC 20), and gain access to higher ground until the waters recede (the kobolds will raise the counterweight the next day).

Water-Filled Room Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; multiple targets (all targets in this section of corridor areas 7 to 9); never miss; onset delay (12 rounds); water (drowning danger); Search DC 24 (27 to find the deactivation device); Disable Device DC 27.

Treasure: The amber gemstone worth 50 gp can be removed. This gemstone is needed to bypass the Doorway of the Beholder in Area 16.

8. HALLWAY OF THE ILITHID (EL 9)

Crude images of mind flayers have been worked into this tunnel's walls, their heads set at random heights and placements. At the far end of the tunnel, the silver skeleton (Area 9) can be seen, suspended in the air.

Traps: Anyone walking towards the silver skeleton risks tripping one of four trapped images, which emit a stun ray. These are marked on the map with shaded areas of effect. While no permanent damage is done, the true danger lies in the fact that stunned characters cannot get out of the way of the gelatinous cubes (see Area 9).

Stun Ray Trap: CR 5; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset (2 times only); *stun ray*; Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 15.

Gelatinous Cube Drop Trap: CR —; mechanical; touch trigger (floor plate); no reset; drops corrupted gelatinous cube from ceiling compartment 20 ft. west; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

Creatures: The gelatinous cube in Area 9 will engulf approaching PCs once at least one of them has been stunned (or as soon as they enter Area 9), and then slam at any PCs not engulfed. As a cube, it is immune to the *stun ray* traps, and ignores drowning if the tunnels are flooding. And as if one cube was not bad enough, Yin Yensine constructed a hidden ramp leading to a loft above this tunnel. Anyone setting off the pressure plate (across the section of hallway at the number 8), opens a trapdoor behind them, dumping a second cube at the opposite end of the tunnel (and atop anyone standing beneath). The two cubes work to slam characters caught between them. Cubes in this corridor are considered squeezed; they suffer a -4 penalty to AC and attacks and move at half speed.

Treasure: Each mind flayer image has a gemstone eye. They are a 300 gp sapphire, a 75 gp white opal, a 10 gp garnet and a 50 gp moonstone. These gems are needed for the doorway into Area 16. With a successful Disable Device (DC 20) check, a PC can remove a gemstone such that it retains its magic power and becomes a *gem of stun ray*. The gems require the command words hidden in Area 6 to operate.

Gem of Stun Ray: This gem releases a single *stun ray* spell (see *Spell Compendium* P. 211) by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Strong conjuration; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *stun ray*; Price 2,275 gp + cost of gem; Weight —.

9. GELATINOUS CUBES (EL 7)

Here resides the famed silver skeleton; in actuality, the bones of the Eludecia, transformed into silver by the vengeful demons she hunted until falling to their ambush. Upon one finger bone, she wears a silver ring; this is the *ring of regeneration* that keeps Eludecia's flesh perpetually regenerating only to be perpetually consumed by the gelatinous cube's acid (her silver bones keep her from dissolving altogether).

The aqueduct's two gelatinous cubes (in areas 8 and 9) were transformed by these demons into corrupted gelatinous cubes, to better secure Eludecia.

CORRUPTED GELATINOUS CUBE **CR 5**

NE Huge Aberration (augmented ooze)
Init -5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (no other senses); Spot -5

AC 11, touch 3, flat-footed 11
hp 62 (4 HD); fast healing 2; **DR** 5/magic
Immune acid, electricity, mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, stunning, not subject to critical hits or flanking
Fort +11, **Ref** -4, **Will** -4

Speed 15 ft. (3 squares)
Melee slam +3 (1d8+3 plus 1d6 acid plus 2 vile)
Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +13
Special Atk acid, engulf, paralysis, disruptive attack

Abilities Str 14, Dex 1, Con 30, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1
SQ enhanced power, transparent
Skills Hide -13, Jump -7, Spot -5

Acid (Ex): A corrupted gelatinous cube's acid does not harm metal or stone.

Engulf (Ex): Although it moves slowly, a corrupted gelatinous cube can simply mow down Large or smaller creatures as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The corrupted gelatinous cube merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make opportunity attacks against the cube, but if anyone who does is not entitled to a saving throw. A creature that does not attempt an attack of opportunity must succeed on a DC 19 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success, it is pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the cube moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the cube's paralysis and acid and are considered to be grappled and trapped within its body. The save DC is Strength-based and includes a +1 racial bonus and a +4 bonus for the cube's enhanced power.

Paralysis (Ex): A corrupted gelatinous cube secretes an anesthetizing slime. A target hit by a cube's melee or engulf attack must succeed on a DC 26 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. The cube can automatically engulf a paralyzed opponent. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +4 bonus for the cube's enhanced power.

Disruptive Attack (Su): The corrupted gelatinous cube deals 2 additional points of vile damage (see Chapter 2 in the *Book of Vile Darkness*) when it touches uncorrupted, living, corporeal nonoutsiders.

Enhanced Power (Su): The save DC for each of the corrupted gelatinous cube's special attacks increases by +4 (already included in the statistics presented here).

Transparent (Ex): Corrupted gelatinous cubes are hard to see, even under ideal conditions, and it takes a DC 15 Spot check to notice one. Any creature that fails to notice a cube and walks into it is automatically engulfed.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE, PART 1

If the silver skeleton is only partially recovered, the PCs will be in possession of a large amount of silver; any of these bones will fetch a good price. If a partial skeleton is brought back to the hostel, Madge and his guests will be initially amazed at the PCs' find. However, further investigation of the bones by taproom patrons (using bardic knowledge, or *commune* or *divination* spells) reveals their true nature—that they belong to Eludecia. The hostel will be unanimous that a full recovery of the skeleton must be made, and it will prove exceedingly difficult for the PCs to leave without this undertaking. Should they decline, they will certainly never be welcomed back to the hostel, and tales of their infamy will spread quickly.

However, if the silver skeleton is entirely removed from the cube, its true nature becomes apparent. The *ring of regeneration* takes immediate effect, beginning to regenerate Eludecia's flesh back onto her bones. In 10 rounds, she will be whole again, though still unconscious and at 1 hit point. Any magical healing at this point will restore her consciousness so that she can

converse with the PCs. Eludecia will ask to be taken to a place of healing—the nearest place is obviously the hostel itself. If brought there, she can receive a *cure serious wounds* spell from *Stoneheart's bone*, and after four days of bed rest she returns to full heath (apart from any healing help that the PCs provide). She will remove the *ring of regeneration* as soon as she can.

If the PCs return with Eludecia, they will become instant celebrities, with Madge offering them complimentary room and board for the duration of their stay, and an open invitation to return at any time. Eludecia has little to offer the PCs right now, as all of her equipment and wealth are gone. She gives her thanks, though, and promises to come to come to their aid at some point in the future. She gives her *ring of regeneration* to the hostel, to enhance the place's healing powers.

As a celebrated hostel guest, Eludecia will become the object of much attention; and should the party remain for the night, they will gain information leading to Part 2.

THE MYSTERIOUS GUEST

If the Mysterious Guest adventure hook was used (or if the DM chooses to introduce that plotline moving forward), the comely woman who first approached them will make her reappearance later that night, and ask what the party intends. If they plan to search for Eludecia's gauntlets (see Part 2), she will wait for their return to "conclude their business." If they show signs of leaving, however, she will make her true identity known (see Concluding the Adventure, part 2).

PART 2: THE KOBOLD WARREN

Part 2 begins back at the Hostel of the Sacred Stone, assuming the PCs take Eludecia there. Surrounded by supporters, Eludecia will present the tale of her conversion and imprisonment (see Sidebar: The Legend of Eludecia), and will praise the PCs for her rescue…and ask them if they are willing to perform a second service for her.

Eludecia's gauntlets were a gift from her angelic lover, which allow someone of her past evil nature (a subtype retained by converted creatures) to wield holy weapons without ill effect. The gauntlets, she remembers, were stripped from her following her battle against the marilith, but are thought to be hidden somewhere within the aqueduct.

THE LEGEND OF ELUDECIA

The legend of Eludecia begins with this demon of temptation as troubled servant of a powerful balor. Sent into the Prime Material plane at the balor's behest, she was later swayed by an angelic lover and converted to good. Eludecia championed her newfound faith against her former kind, battling demons and evil outsiders wherever they appeared in the world.

Still, the succubus sought a greater level of penance for her past actions, and went on an epic quest into the Abyss—in search of the balor she formerly served. By defeating him, she felt she would gain full redemption, as well as prevent the balor's assaults on the Prime Material.

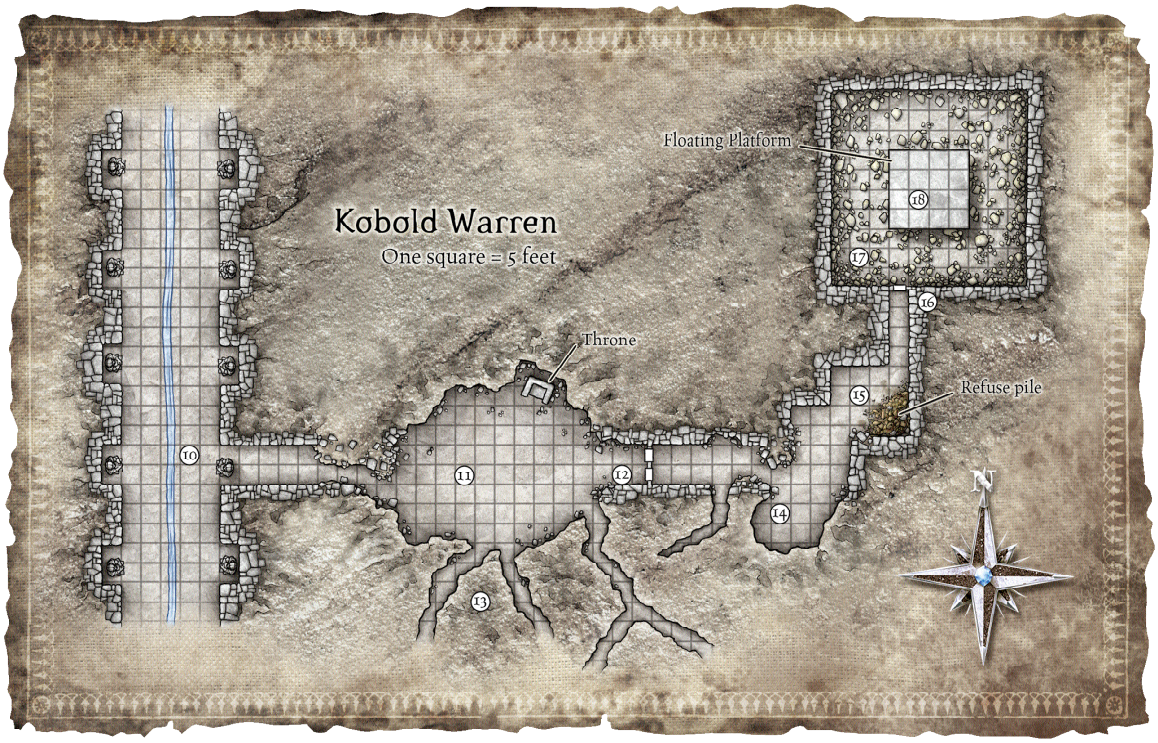
Eludecia made use of her succubus form to venture deep into the Abyss. Only when her goodness was sensed did she resort to her magical charms—and her blade, when necessary—to continue on. Eventually, she managed her way into the balor's stronghold. Although the gathered demons of his court would have gladly destroyed, the balor allowed Eludecia the chance to step forward; perhaps he thought she had ventured such great distance to beg forgiveness and convert back to her evil ways.

Instead, Eludecia brought forth a celestial item that summoned both her and the balor to the Prime Material plane. There, she and her angelic lover confronted the balor in battle, and—incredibly—won. Although not permanently destroyed, the balor was banished for a period of no less than a thousand years.

Eludecia gained her redemption and the status of paladinhood. She also gained the perpetual enmity of the balor. Filled with thoughts of vengeance; the balor dispatched his personal general, the marilith Aishapra, to hunt her down. Eludecia was ambushed on a pilgrimage to visit the stone giant's mountain shrine, a journey she undertook knowing the close relation between her own and the stone giant's conversion.

Although defeated, Eludecia's death was not punishment enough. The balor provided his general with spells to transform Eludecia's bones into silver, and to store them with the gelatinous cube; if she wished the serve the Prime Material, she would remain there, hidden within its underground tunnels, forever trapped in agonizing pain.

Eludecia was never seen again...except for the rumored apparition of her silver skeleton.



If Eludecia's prison is discovered first: The PCs have likely discovered the entrance to Eludecia's prison before they discovered the entrance to the kobolds; if so, a small contingent of kobolds will suddenly make themselves known within the hostel. They too had been drawn to see the succubus, and have been quietly listening, unnoticed at the back of the crowd; the kobolds will announce, in very crude Common (unless any PC can help translate Draconic), that they know about Eludecia's gauntlets.

According to these kobolds, Yin Yensine, in his refurbishing of the aqueduct, came across these items and brought them back to his laboratory. (In reality, the gauntlets were given to him by the marilith, in exchange for helping trap Eludecia's prison.) Unfortunately, Yin Yensine died many years ago, but the entrance to his lab have retained their traps—potent traps, that no kobold since has been able to get past.

Struck by Eludecia's plight, these kobolds offer to take the party back to their warren, which in itself presents a diplomatic challenge. To help, Madge will repeat his offer, to be taken to the chieftain, of a barrel of beer every other month.

If the kobold warren is discovered first: It may be entirely possible that in their exploration of the aqueduct, the PCs come upon the kobold warren before they find Eludecia's prison. In this case, it is suggested that the kobold chieftain agree to cease harassing the hostel, on the condition that the PCs find and seek the approval of the silver skeleton. The chieftain will even offer guides to lead the PCs to the skeleton's tunnel (Area 7), although they will adamantly refuse to enter.

Of course, once the PCs enter, the kobolds will look to seal off the tunnel and drown them as an offering to the skeleton in hopeful appeasement for better fishing.

DUNGEON FEATURES

This section of the aqueduct largely concerns the side tunnels caved in by the ancient rampaging of the mountain's blue dragon (the very one felled by Sonnlinor Stoneheart) and later carved out by Yin Yensine and his kobold tribe. Most of these kobold tunnels are crude, narrow, and meandering, measuring no more than 2 feet wide and 4 feet tall at the most; periodically, however, these tunnels will break into wider aqueduct side tunnels.

10. WARREN ENTRANCE (EL 7)

The kobold warren may be accessed behind this statue of a dwarven mason, with its face re-carved into the image of a kobold (that of Yin Yensine himself). If the PCs are escorted by any kobolds from the hostel, they will be allowed to pass freely. If the PCs are alone, they will be challenged by a contingent of kobold guards

who will turn anyone away without official business to see the chieftain, unless they can be convinced, or bribed, or coerced, or removed.

Creatures: If the PCs choose to fight their way through, the 10 kobolds will fight in a retrograde action back to the throne room. Once there, the alarm will have been sufficiently raised to summon the mob of kobolds (see Area 11 below), which will attempt to overwhelm the PCs (and in which case, none of the negotiations detailed in Area 11 will take place).

Kobold Swordsman (10) **CR 1 each**
Male kobold Warrior 4
LE Small Humanoid (reptilian)
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Draconic

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14
(+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather armor)
hp 18 (4 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0
Weakness light sensitivity

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee short sword +6 (1d4+1/19-20)
Ranged hand crossbow +6 (1d3/19-20)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +1

Abilities Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness
Skills Climb +3, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +5, Jump +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Search +2, Spot +2, Swim +3
Possessions short sword in bad condition, leather armor, hand crossbow, 10 hand crossbow bolts, torn and dirty clothing

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

11. The Gilded Throne (EL 8)

If the PCs are led here by any kobolds, they will meet no resistance along the way. However, upon entering the throne room, a huge number of kobolds will have gathered to watch the proceedings…from a safe distance. An almost endless number dart around the cavern outskirts to catch a glimpse of the PCs, hissing in suspicion, fleeing back away, etc. The chieftain himself—Chief Blas, a horrendously fat kobold sporting an eyepatch—sits upon an impossibly lavish throne, constructed entirely from gold and encrusted with rich jewels.

In reality, this is a simple stone chair covered by a *permanent illusion* spell—an ancient gift from Yin Yensine to his tribe (kobolds that have attempted to steal its jewels, and subsequently walked away empty-handed, simply marveled at the throne's apparent magical security). The throne also allows Yin Yensine's undead form (in Area 18) to see through the eyes and ears of the chieftain, and to guide him through telepathic whispers.

If the PCs have not yet rescued Eludecia, the chieftain will direct them to her prison (Area 7). However, if the PCs have already rescued Eludecia, the kobolds from the hostel will humbly bring the chieftain up to speed on recent events—that the silver skeleton was freed by the party and revealed to be the goodly succubus paladin. The kobolds will relate the succubus's request for her gauntlets, and that the party has been sent as her champions.

However the PCs negotiate, the chieftain will eventually allow them to pass, as he's instructed by Yin Yensine. On a successful Spot check (DC 20), PCs can note that the chieftain occasionally grows glassy-eyed and distracted while listening to Yin's voice inside his head. Of course, the chieftain will still attempt to extract a price for their passage, which will vary depending how much deference he is accorded. For starters, the chieftain will claim ownership of the silver skeleton and will asked to be compensated for its "loss," as well as for any kobolds slain by the PCs (no matter which side attacked first). Chief Blas initially asks for 1000 gp (the largest amount of wealth he can think of), modified by the following:

- Any of the PCs speak Draconic: -100 gp
- PCs have not slain any kobolds: -200 gp
- PCs have slain kobolds: +50 gp/kobold
- PCs mention Madge's generous beer offer: -150 gp

The PCs can make Diplomacy or Intimidate checks to further lower the amount they have to pay. Based on the check result (and other characters can aid the principal negotiator), modify the amount they have to pay as follows:

Check Result	Adjustment to Compensation
Less than 15	+250 gp
15-19	-150 gp
20-24	-200 gp
25+	-350 gp

At the end of negotiations, the chieftain will also explain that Yin Yensine sanctified their warren, such that only kobolds may pass through. However, those

that safely pass through the Doorway of the Kobold (Area 12) may continue.

If the PCs desire, they need not negotiate with the kobold chieftain. They are free to threaten, bully and even fight their way past. If it comes down to combat, the PCs will quickly become aware the kobolds will defend their warren to the best of their abilities.

Creatures: The kobolds fight collectively to defend their warren if they need to. If any kobold in the throne room is threatened or attacked with deadly force (or if the PCs have fought their way inside the entrance), the others will raise the alarm. Two rounds later, they will have collected themselves into a Riot (Mob of Kobolds) from pg. 59 of the *DMG II*.

Blas is loathe to fight, and will hide at the first opportunity, and beg for his life if found. He carries no weapons, and while the throne's jewels are illusionary, he does wear a 100 gp black pearl set in his eyepatch. Blas does not know that this gemstone can be used to help circumvent the Doorway of the Beholder (Area 16), nor does he know about the other gemstones hidden throughout the aqueduct. If the PCs realize they need this gemstone to pass, Blas may be persuaded to part with it, but will look for a heft security deposit in return.

Riot (Mob of Kobolds) CR 8

LE Gargantuan Humanoid (reptilian, mob of small kobolds)
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +, Spot +
Languages Draconic

AC 11, touch 7, flat-footed 10
hp 135 (30 HD)
Immune critical hits, flanking, grappling, tripping, bull rushing
Fort +17, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8
Weakness light sensitivity

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee mob (5d6)
Base Atk +22; **Grp** +33
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun
Special Atk expert grappler, trample 2d6-1

Abilities Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
SQ mob anatomy
Feats Alertness, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun
Skills Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2
Possessions each member (48 total) has leather armor, spear, sling and 10 rocks

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.
Expert Grappler (Ex): A mob of kobolds can maintain a grapple without penalty and still make attacks against other targets (normally, attacking other targets while grappling imposes a –20 penalty on grapple checks). A mob of kobolds is never considered flat-footed while grappling.
Trample (Ex): A mob of kobolds that simply moves over a creature and doesn't end its movement with that creature in one of its occupied squares can trample the creature for 2d6-1 points of damage. The victim can either make an attack of opportunity against the mob or make a Reflex save (DC 24) to take half damage.
Mob Anatomy (Ex): Spells or effects that target specific numbers of creatures can have an effect on a mob. Each specific creature that is slain, disabled, or otherwise incapacitated by spells or effects that target specific creatures bestows two negative levels on the mob. A mob that gains negative levels equal to its Hit Dice breaks up as if reduced to 0 hit points. Negative levels gained in this manner are not the result of negative energy (and thus cannot be blocked by *death ward* or removed by *restoration*), but never result in permanent level loss. A mob takes half again as much damage (+50%) from spells or effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and evocation spells.

Although mobs are treated as one creature, it sometimes becomes necessary to determine the fate of a specific individual caught up in the mob. If a mob is dispersed by nonlethal attacks, there are no casualties. If the mob is dispersed by lethal attacks, assume that 30% of its number are slain and 30% are reduced to 0 hit points. To determine a specific individual's fate, simply roll d%: a result of 01–30 indicates death, 31–60 indicates the victim is reduced to 0 hit points, and a roll of 61–100 indicates the victim escapes relatively unscathed.

Chieftain Blas CR 5

Male kobold Warrior 8
LE Small Humanoid (reptilian)
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Draconic

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 17
(+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +5 chain shirt)

hp 44 (8 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2
Weakness light sensitivity

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee unarmed strike +13 (1d2+2)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12
Feats Alertness, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (short sword)
Skills Bluff +3, Climb +4, Hide +7, Intimidate +3, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Spot +4, Swim +4
Possessions *+1 chain shirt*

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Treasure: Blas wears a 100 gp black pearl and wears a *+1 chain shirt*. The gemstone is needed to bypass the doorway in Area 16.

12. DOORWAY OF THE KOBOLD

The doorway to Yin Yensine's laboratory section is marked by an elaborate archway, depicting improbable kobold victories over all manner of creatures: dragons, demons, and the like. Yin Yensine constructed the doorway to cast a *polymorph* spell on anyone walking through, transforming the victim into a kobold. As per the spell, this must be a willing transformation. Anyone walking back out through the door undergoes a complete reversal, transforming to their original form. The PCs may look to counter the doorway's *polymorph* using whatever means are available. However, the role-playing exercise here is not to counter the doorway's effects, but to entertain the notion of continuing forward in kobold form.

Of course, if the players are completely opposed to roleplaying as kobolds, they should be allowed to continue, but as a general rule, consider the tunnels beyond this point infused with magical devices which ensure that the *polymorph* spell stays in effect for the remainder of the adventure.

If the players do accept a temporary kobold form, as per the *polymorph* spell they will gain the Strength (9), Dexterity (13) and Constitution (10) of kobolds; however, they retain their own Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma, and benefit from the equivalent of a day's rest of healing.

Treasure: The doorway is set with two gem eyes: a diamond worth 500 gp and a bloodstone worth 50 gp. These are needed in Area 16. With a successful Disable Device check (DC 20), a PC can remove a gem such that the magic properties remain intact. The diamond becomes a *gem of polymorph (kobold only)* and the bloodstone becomes a *gem of dispel magic (polymorph spells only)*. The gems require the command words hidden in Area 6 to operate.

Gem of Polymorph: This gem releases a single *polymorph* spell by spell trigger activation that changes the target into a kobold. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Moderate transmutation; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *polymorph*; Price 1,300 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Dispel Polymorph: This gem releases a single *dispel magic* spell by spell trigger activation keyed specifically to dispel any polymorph spells within the range. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Faint abjuration; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *dispel magic*; Price 975 gp; Weight —.

13. WARREN TUNNELS

These tunnels lead to the dizzying network of the kobold warren, filled with their living quarters and countless trapped corridors (details of which, and encounters along the way, are not included in this adventure). Should the PCs wish to explore this direction, a recommendation includes using the Kobold Lair map, as found in *Dragon* Magazine #332. Additional traps for these tunnels can be found at http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/we/20060127a.

14. CHIEFTAIN'S KITCHEN

This cave serves as the kitchen responsible for feeding the Chieftain Blas. A number of kobold chefs are

Depending on the makeup of your group, if they especially enjoy the roleplaying aspect, you might consider changing the *polymorph* effect to a *polymorph any object*; in which case, the PCs would gain all the stats of kobolds (including Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8), and would need to roleplay these additional effects accordingly.

usually here in a frantic state of preparation, concocting all manner of foul dishes, oblivious to any commotion in the throne room. If the PCs arrive here in kobold form, they may re-supply food and water. They may also find a number of kobold-sized knives and cleavers for use as weapons. If the chefs are threatened, they will scatter and hide within the many pots and cauldrons. If questioned, the kobolds here know nothing beyond what is in Area 15; they will intentionally neglect to mention the otyugh.

Kobolds (10): hp 4 each; see *Monster Manual* P. 161.

15. GARBAGE DUMP (EL 4)

The garbage dump behind the chieftain's kitchen hosts the makeshift guardian to Area 16's doorway.

Creature: In a toppling pile of fish bones, refuse, and other things even too disgusting for even kobolds to eat, resides an otyugh. Normally, it is content to the wallow in its refuse pile with its eyestalk rising from the top. PCs can detect it with a successful, Spot check (opposed by its Hide skill check with a +2 modifier for conditions). The kobold chefs are just as keen to avoid it. However, the otyugh will attempt to grab anyone walking past on their way to Area 16.

Otyugh: hp 36; see *Monster Manual* P. 204.

16. DOORWAY OF THE BEHOLDER (EL 8)

The entrance to Yin Yensine's inner laboratory is guarded by the kobold trapmaster's greatest accomplishment: the Doorway of the Beholder. The doorway itself resembles the large stone image of a beholder, with its central eye closed and gemstones in each of its ten eye sockets. The doorway will remain closed unless anyone approaches with the correct "answer." As written in Yin's journal (Area 6), "Number of eyes is key." This means the PCs must have found and collected the 10 gemstone eyes hidden throughout the aqueduct. If a group approaches with all 10 correct gemstones, the central eye will open and admit them through. Otherwise, the doorway casts an effect from one of its eye stalks at anyone standing in front of front of it.

Beholder Eye Ray Trap: CR 8; magical; proximity trigger; auto reset; eye ray from list below +10 ranged touch attack; Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 20.

Eye Ray List (d10, but it won't fire a ray corresponding to a gemstone the person approaching carries in his or her possession):

1 (obsidian, 10 gp): *charm person* (with command to defend the doorway, Will save DC 15)
2 (emerald, 300 gp): *disintegrate* (Fort save DC 20)
3 (amber, 50 gp): *telekinesis* (shoving those affected into the refuse pile, or nearest wall) (Will save DC 19)
4 (sapphire, 300 gp): *flesh to stone* (Fort save DC 20)
5 (white opal, 75 gp: *charm monster* (with command to defend the doorway) (Will save DC 18)
6 (garnet, 10 gp): *sleep* (Will save DC 15)
7 (moonstone, 50 gp): *fear* (Will save DC 18)
8 (black pearl, 100 gp): *inflict moderate wounds* (Will save DC 15)
9 (bloodstone, 50 gp): *slow* (Will save DC 17)
10 (or more than 11) (diamond, 500 gp): *finger of death* (Fort save DC 21)

So long as anyone approaches the doorway without all 10 correct gemstones, the eye stalks will continue to cast a random effect every 5 feet that the approaching creature moves. Once they reach the doorway, it casts an effect every round.

Treasure: Each gemstone can be removed from the doorway. With a successful Disable Device check (DC 22), a PC can remove a gem such that its magic powers remain intact and it becomes a gem with the appropriate spell stored within. They require the command words hidden in Area 6 to operate.

Gem of Charm Person: This gem releases a single *charm person* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Faint enchantment; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *charm person*; Price 335 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Disintegrate: This gem releases a single *disintegrate* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Moderate transmutation; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *disintegrate*; Price 2,250 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Telekinesis: This gem releases a single *telekinesis* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Moderate transmutation; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *telekinesis*; Price 1,675 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Flesh to Stone: This gem releases a single *flesh to stone* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the

spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Moderate transmutation; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *flesh to stone*; Price 2,250 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Charm Monster: This gem releases a single *charm monster* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Moderate enchantment; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *charm monster*; Price 1,375 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Sleep: This gem releases a single *sleep* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Faint enchantment; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *sleep*; Price 335 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Fear: This gem releases a single *fear* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Moderate enchantment; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *fear*; Price 1,350 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Inflict Moderate Wounds: This gem releases a single *inflict moderate wounds* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Faint necromancy; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *inflict moderate wounds*; Price 750 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Slow: This gem releases a single *slow* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Moderate enchantment; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *slow*; Price 1,025 gp; Weight —.

Gem of Finger of Death: This gem releases a single *finger of death* spell by spell trigger activation. Once the spell is released, the gem permanently loses all magical powers and cannot be recharged.

Strong necromancy; CL 13th; Craft Wand, *finger of death*; Price 2,775 gp; Weight —.

17. LABORATORY FLOOR (EL 7)

Yin Yensine enjoyed his privacy, and made certain that no intruders could interrupt his work. His laboratory proper (Area 18) can be seen from here, a platform floating 25 feet off the ground over the center of the chamber.

This lower chamber served as the casting off point for Yin Yensine's failed experiments; the ground is completely littered with broken sprockets and gears of all manner and sizes, tubing, pipes, bits of masonry, shards of glass, and countless pages torn from Yin Yensine's notebooks, crumpled into wads and cast over the side of the laboratory proper (Area 18). All this mess makes for difficult ground to travel—consider each square difficult terrain.

Reaching the platform will be a challenge for kobold-sized characters, though they can find the means to construct a ladder of some sort from the raw materials here on the floor. However, this chamber is not without its dangers.

Creatures: Along the outskirts, PCs may notice a constant swirling whirlwind throwing about loose papers and small objects with a successful Spot check (DC 10). In actuality, this is a living spell (a living gust of wind) that arose from some obscure combination of loose spellbook pages and material components littered among the mess. The living spell moves in constant rotation around the chamber, but will not attack unless

DMs might also employ the following alternate solution to the doorway: In honor of the beholder's 11 eyes, only a group with 11 living eyes may approach—at which point, the central eye will open and admit them through. If this solution is used, the doorway will not cast random effects at them, but will instead cast effects from the eyestalk equating the number of living eyes that approach. For example, if three PCs approach (6 eyes), the doorway will cast only *sleep* effects at them. Where they find the 11th eye is up to them, but they might remember that Chief Blas has only one eye, and may somehow be persuaded (with extreme coercion) to help.

In any case, if the PCs find themselves stuck (if they have not discovered Yin's journal or all of the gemstones), they might gather additional information from the warren's kobolds (you can direct them to missing gemstones), or they may use *stone tell* to speak with the surrounding walls, statues, or doorway itself to learn this information.

it comes within 20 feet of a moving creature, or unless anyone attempts to raise a ladder to (or otherwise tries to reach) the laboratory above—which it will then attempt to knock over).

Living Gust of Wind **CR 5**

N Medium Ooze
Init +0; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind)

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 13
hp 28 (5 HD); DR 10/magic
Immune mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, stunning, critical hits or flanking
SR 15
Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Speed fly 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee slam +4 (1d4+1 plus *gust of wind* effect)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4
Special Atk spell effect, engulf

Abilities Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 13

Spell Effect (Su): A creature hit by a living gust of wind's slam attack is subjected to the normal effect of a *gust of wind* spell, as if it were within the area of effect of the spell itself (Fort DC 14).

Engulf (Ex): A living gust of wind can flow around creatures that fit within its space as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The living gust of wind merely has to move over the opponent. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the living gust of wind, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 14) or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the spell moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the full normal effect of the spell(s) each round on the living gust of wind's turn, and are considered to be grappled.

However, an even great danger lurks. When Yin Yensine discovered his laboratory floor to be infested with spiders, rats, and the occasional intruding kobold in search of scrap parts, he devised a guardian that would periodically scour the laboratory floor, devouring anything living it came across. No doubt inspired by the aqueduct's gelatinous cubes, Yin Yensine wanted something truly grand to fit his sense of his laboratory's worth, and so invented the clockwork tarrasque.

PCs may notice several large pieces of junk pushed together in the rough form of a cave with a successful Spot check (DC 15). No sounds, smells or light emits from this cave. After the PCs spend 3 rounds on the laboratory floor (or by investigating the cave's interior), they can hear the subtle clicking of something clockwork winding itself to life with a Listen check (DC 20). Two rounds later, the clockwork tarrasque emerges and attacks. As the clockwork tarrasque emerges, the living gust of wind will take notice and investigate as well, engaging with it in melee. The living gust of wind will attack the clockwork tarrasque with the same chance that it will attack any of the PCs on a given round of combat, though the clockwork tarrasque is apt to ignore it as nothing more than an annoying wind.

Clockwork Tarrasque (huge animated object): hp 84; Speed 30 ft.; see *Monster Manual* P. 14.

18. Laboratory Proper (EL 9)

Yin Yensine's laboratory remains exactly as he left it upon his "death." Numerous shelves line the edge of the platform, filled with all manner of tomes and volumes covering such diverse subjects as spellcrafting, trapmaking, aberrations. Despite his kobold nature, Yin Yensine harbored a scholarly nature, and most of these tomes are written in languages other than Draconic. In addition, trunks and chests stacked on the platform are filled with all manner of spell components, trapmaking tools, and raw materials for traps and other experiments. With a diligent Search (DC 20), they can find a small velvet-lined box containing Eludecia's gauntlets beneath the false bottom of one junk-filled trunk.

In the center of the platform, Yin Yensine himself lays in his final "resting" state. His laboratory table has been converted into an open, makeshift sarcophagus, in which rests Yin's mummified body. He lies partially

The clockwork tarrasque merely recreates the physical appearance of this frightful creature. You might wish to increase its challenge (and the EL of the encounter by 1) by incorporating some of the actual tarrasque's special abilities, such as Augmented Critical (Ex) and Carapace (Ex).

obscured beneath a stained, white shroud, and wears a silver deathmask (his *clockwork mask of the mind flayer*). Surrounding the sarcophagus, a number of clockwork arms have been constructed. Yin experimented with a way to mummify himself using automated clockwork. To a large extent, these clockwork arms have succeeded. Yin's organs have been removed, and his body largely preserved and wrapped. However, the arms did not do a really good job on him, and he continuously reeks of rotting flesh and drips preserving fluid. He rests, his countenance hidden under his deathmask, and waits for anyone to approach.

During his life, Yin worked with the marilith Aishapra (see Adventure Hooks: The Mysterious Guest) to build Eludecia's prison. Aishapra also informed Yin of her plan to send would-be rescuers to test the prison's security. Yin, seeing the wisdom of this plan, adopted a similar strategy. As he rests within his sarcophagus, he is able to see and hear through whatever kobold chieftain currently resides on the gilded throne. Through the years, Yin has encouraged these chieftains to allow any would-be tomb raiders (kobold or otherwise) to attempt to reach his laboratory. So far, none have made it past the Doorway of the Beholder (Area 16).

Traps: Yin can still command the clockwork arms surrounding the sarcophagus to help in his defense, as they can still make crude movements. Each is treated as a trap, which attacks a random adjacent target other than Yin. In addition, the platform incorporates a number of profane symbols and small altars to aberrant gods (Yin worships the gods of the aboleths, beholders and mind flayers, in addition to the kobolds), which create a permanent *desecrate* effect (as the spell of that name); this causes a -6 profane penalty against turning, as well as providing Yin a +2 bonus to attack, damage, and saving throw rolls, and +2 hit points per HD (included in his statistics).

Mechanical Arm Trap (4): CR 1; mechanical; command trigger (Yin activates); auto reset; Atk +10 melee (2d6, slam); tentacle has hardness 10 and 30 hit points; Search DC 17; Disable Device DC 20.

Should the PCs defeat Yin Yensine, he will attempt a final escape, leaping back into his sarcophagus and throwing the shroud over himself. Doing so, he can immediately teleport himself to the gilded throne. Should any PC attempt to follow him this way, not only will they discover that the sarcophagus only works for Yin, but—unless disabled—the clockwork arms will continue to attack as well.

Creature: Yin Yensine will wait until his body is examined before attacking the PCs, rising and striking out against these "disrespectful grave robbers." Yin cannot be bargained with, and will attack until the PCs are either slain or thrown from the edge of the platform, or he is slain.

Yin Yensine **CR 9**

Mummified Male Kobold Sorcerer 6**
NE Small Undead (augmented humanoid [reptilian])
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Draconic, Common, Undercommon

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 21
(+1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural)
hp 39 (6 HD); **DR** 5/—
Immune mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution), fatigue and exhaustion effects, any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless), death from massive damage
Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7
Weakness light sensitivity, vulnerability to fire, destroyed at 0 hit points

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Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee slam +5 (1d6+1 plus mummy rot)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** -4
Special Atk despair, mummy rot
Combat Gear *clockwork mask of the mind flayer*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 6th):
3rd (4/day, DC 18)—*lightning bolt*
2nd (6/day, DC 17)—*baleful transposition**, *malevolent miasma**
1st (8/day, DC 16)—*expeditious retreat, magic missile, shield, slide**
0th (6/day, DC 15)— *amanuensis**, *caltrops**, *detect magic, mage hand, mending, open/close, read magic*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 20
Feats Alertness, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item
Skills Concentration +5, Craft (trapmaking) +11, Hide +6, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +4, Listen +4, Search +2, Spellcraft +5, Spot +4
Possessions *clockwork mask of the mind flayer*

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Despair (Su): At the mere sight of a mummified creature, the viewer must make a successful Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that target cannot be affected again by that mummy's despair ability for 24 hours.

Mummy Rot (Su): Supernatural disease—natural weapon, Fortitude DC as above, incubation period 1 minute; damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha. Unlike normal diseases, mummy rot persists until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or is cured as described below. Mummy rot is a powerful curse, not a natural disease. A character attempting to cast any conjuration (healing) spell on a creature afflicted with mummy rot must make a DC 20 caster level check, or else the spell has no effect on the afflicted character. To eliminate mummy rot, the curse must first be broken with *break enchantment* or *remove curse* (requiring a DC 20 caster level check for either spell), after which a caster level check is no longer necessary to cast healing spells on the victim, and the mummy rot can be magically cured as any normal disease. An afflicted creature that dies of mummy rot shrivels away into sand that blows away into nothing at the first wind.

* Starred spells come from the *Spell Compendium*. Replace with spells you do have access to if you don't have this work.

** Yin Yensine was a 13th level sorcerer at the height of his power, when he created the kobold lair within the aqueduct and his master traps. However, while collecting parts for a new trap idea, he ran afoul of a vampire. He prevailed, but it cost him a lot and he never recovered his former power level. He died soon after, choosing to undergo mummification before his followers discovered his weakened state.

Treasure: Yin wears a *clockwork mask of the mind flayer*. There is 2,000 gp worth of tools and gear in the laboratory that they can collect as well. Eludecia's gauntlets are hidden in the laboratory as well.

Clockwork Mask of the Mind Flayer: This mask appears like the visage of a mind flayer, complete with four tentacles mounted at the mouth area. The wearer may make one attack with each tentacle at his or her highest base attack bonus as if they were natural weapons. This a standard action and the wearer cannot attack with any other weapons when using the tentacle attacks. Further, the wearer gains the following two special attacks.

Improved Grab (*Ex*): To use this ability, the wearer must hit a Tiny, Small, or Medium creature with its tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and attaches the tentacle to the opponent's head. If the wearer begins his or her turn with at least one tentacle attached, it can try to attach its remaining tentacles with a single grapple check instead of attacking with them. The opponent can escape with a single successful grapple check or an Escape Artist check.

Extract (*Ex*): If the wearer begins his or her turn with all four tentacles attached, he or she can make a single grapple check to extract the opponent's brain, instantly killing that creature. This power is useless against constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, and undead. It is not instantly fatal to foes with multiple heads, such as ettins and hydras.

Faint enchantment; CL 13th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Improved Grapple feat or Improved Grab special ability, *animate objects*; Price 8,000 gp; Weight 6 lbs.

Eludecia's Gauntlets: These magical gauntlets protect evil wearers from the harmful effects of holy weapons, allowing an evil creature to pick up and wield a holy weapon without suffering negative levels while doing so.

Faint abjuration; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *undetectable alignment*; Price 12,000 gp; Weight 4 lbs.

Development: If Yin manages to escape, when the PCs return to the warren they will find a gloating Yin seated atop the gilded throne, with Chieftain Blas and the other kobolds huddled around him in terrified supplication. In the midst of his kobolds, Yin falsely believes that they will defend him against the PCs. If the PCs choose to continue the fight against him, Yin will order the kobolds to attack. However, the kobolds are powerless in their terror of a mummified Yin Yensine, and do not respond to his commands. If anything, they will be more than glad to see the PCs win the battle, even though a successful outcome means the gilded throne finally loses its illusionary cover, revealing it to be simply rock.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE, PART 2

If the PCs successfully return with the gauntlets, they'll receive a hero's welcome. However, even if the PCs fail to return with the Eludecia's gauntlets, they will still be thanked for the efforts as well as offered complimentary room, board and healing at the hostel. No less a person than Madge himself will offer to mount a return expedition, accompanied by several of the hostel guests—as well as by a gathering of kobolds if Yin

Yensine occupies the gilded throne. Despite his legendary status, the kobolds would much rather have their legends stay dead than rule over them.

THE MYSTERIOUS GUEST (EL VARIES)

If the Mysterious Guest hook was used (or if the DM decides to introduce that plotline anytime moving forward), Aishapra will then make her reappearance after the PCs return. Still in human guise, she will discreetly arrange to meet the PCs that evening, after events have calmed and she can bring them their reward.

That night, Aishapra will meet the PCs at Eludecia's side by the fireplace, where she will reveal herself to be the marilith that imprisoned Eludecia. Aishapra will also reveal her motives, to see if Eludecia's prison could be discovered and breached. Now that it has, the time will soon come to dispatch Eludecia once and for all.

Aishapra is clearly an overwhelming foe for the PCs at this level (her published stats may be found at: http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/fc/20050921a). If the PCs are wise enough to raise an alarm quickly, Madge and the hostel guests will awaken and stampede to the scene, doing their best to intervene. Otherwise, the PCs will face Aishapra alone.

Creatures: However she is confronted, Aishapra will summon 4d10 dretches into the room on the first round (she succeeds on the check)—a parting gift to those that would oppose her, and then teleport away from the hostel on the second round.

Dretches: hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* P. 42.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

"Legend of the Silver Skeleton" may be continued in any number of ways. If the PCs rescue Eludecia, no matter what else transpires they will have earned the friendship of Eludecia, Madge, and the hostel. However, they will also have incurred powerful enemies, namely the marilith Aishapra and her balor lord. Aishapra may show up again, or at least work through demonic agents from behind the scenes to make life difficult for the PCs.

If the PCs are interested in continuing their adventures with Eludecia, she will ask them to help send word to her angelic lover about her rescue. In addition, while Eludecia's gauntlets may have been recovered, a good deal of her original equipment remains unaccounted for: her holy glaive, armor, and sword. These items might have been scattered across the lands, or consolidated with fiendish guards…perhaps at the ruins of the mountain lake temple, located at the very top of the aqueduct.

And finally, Yin Yensine's laboratory contains a number of fiendish works. These might include a treasure map showing, for example, the location to the fabled Tomb of Horrors (http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/oa/20051031a) or White Plume Mountain (http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/oa/20051207a).